

# The Comets' Tale

*The Official  
Newsletter of the*



**April 2008**

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The Comets' Tale is the official newsletter and record of the Ventura County Comets, AMA Chartered Club #173 and is published monthly at the Comets' Tale Plaza, somewhere in Ventura.

**Editorial contributions are welcome.**

Next Meeting:

Thursday, 17 April, 2008, 7:30 PM at the  
Oak View Community Center



**Coming  
Up!**

**19, 20 April 2008**

Comets' Float Fly at Lake  
Casitas

**Saturday, 10 May**

Balloon Drop, Comets'  
Field

**18, 19 October 2007**

Comets' Float Fly, Lake  
Casitas

**1st Sunday of each Month**

First Sunday At the Airport  
Static displays, Young  
Eagle Rides  
Santa Paula Airport  
Free

## Root's Rambling

With a new month I get another chance to ramble on about this and that or whatever comes to mind. I had a nice morning at the field today (April 3). It rained last night and was misting on the way, but it soon stopped. There was no wind, no sun in my eyes, and no people (only four of us showed up). In addition it was much warmer than last week when the field was crowded with people. Being originally from the Northwest I'm continually amazed at the people in Southern California. Everyone looks out the window and if there is a cloud in the sky they go back to bed (or at least it seems like that at times).

After 7 flights I seem to have the Spitfire dialed in. I ended up taking 1½ pounds of nose weight out with only 5 ounces of the original nose weight remaining. The plane now weighs about 22 pounds and flies great. I did have to replace the wheels with heavier and stronger ones. Picture 1 shows the Spitfire in its final form

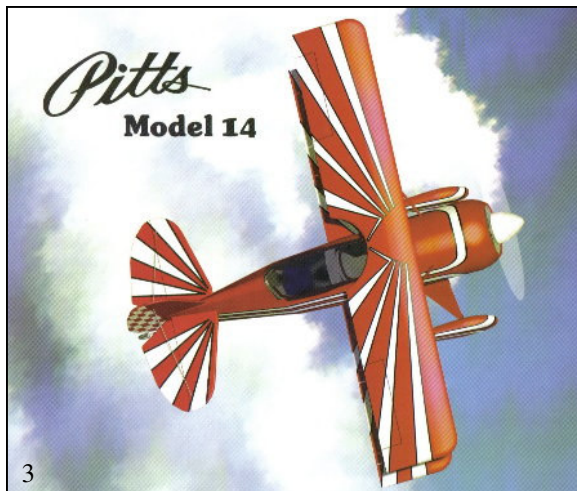




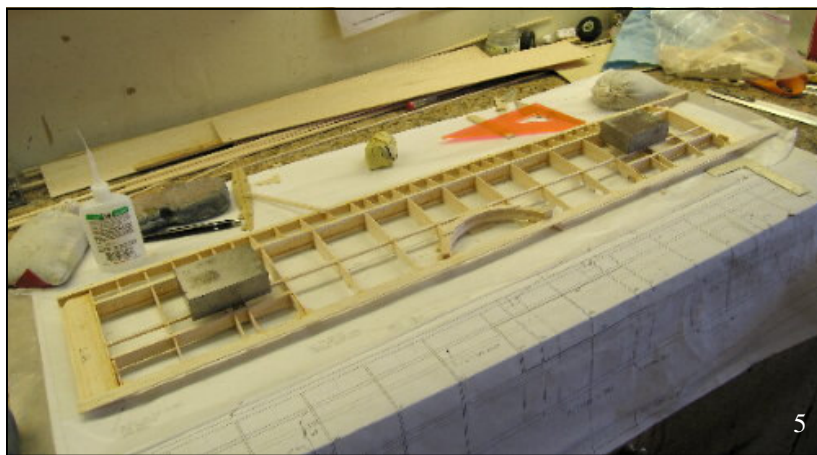


(funny, it looks just like it did originally). There is some weight on the tail wheel now so it has much improved ground handling, and with the center of gravity moved aft about five percent of the mean aerodynamic chord it lands much slower (or seems to).

With the Spitfire completed and several other damaged models repaired and flying I've had the chance to start on a new



(simpler) project. Since I totaled my electric powered Sukhoi (a spectacular goof while flying close to the ground) I needed to build a new model for the undamaged motor. Since I have built three versions of the Sukhoi I decided I would try something different. I am building a semi scale Pitts Model 14 biplane. Pictures 2 and 3 are from the Steen Aero lab brochure on the inter-



net. I started with Model Airplane News Magazine plans for a small version designed by Pat Tritle utilizing rudder and elevator. I scaled up the design 10% to achieve the same wing area as my successful Sukhoi. I am adding ailerons and changed some of the structure to what I think is more efficient. The resulting wingspan is 33.5 inches so it is a pretty compact design. I expect the weight to be about 30 oz. or less. Picture 4 shows part of my shop with the model under construction. Picture

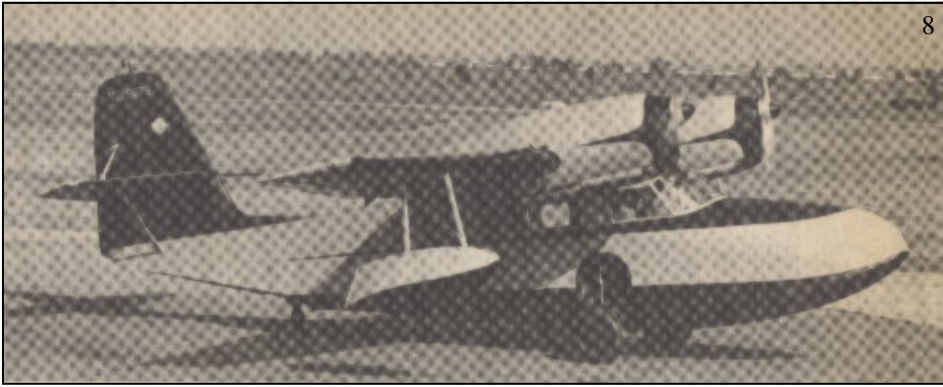


5 shows the top wing under construction. Picture 6 shows the bare bones fuselage and empennage.

With the club float fly coming up I start thinking about float planes that would make neat models. One of my all time favorites is the Curtiss R3C series. The R3C-1 is shown in picture 7. Many of the Schneider racers from the 1920's make interesting models. The Curtiss R3C-2 racer that Jimmy Dolittle flew to win the 1925 Schneider race (which was held in Baltimore) is in the Smithsonian National Air Museum.







The Grumman Widgeon is another favorite. This was a four place amphibian with a span of 40 ft. An early version is shown in picture 8. I have plans for both of these models but I've never gotten around to building either one. Another airplane which would make a neat amphibian model is the obscure Italian Piaggio P136L shown in picture 9.

I've seen only one picture of a model of this plane. Piaggio also made a land only version of this airplane. Northrop had several of them that they took in partial trade for some of their fighter planes. Northrop used them for flying employees between the Hawthorne plant and Palm-



dale. I rode in one of these several times in the mid 70's.

I will close with the airplane shown in picture 10 which probably wouldn't make a very good scale model. It didn't make a very good full scale airplane. The Convair YF2Y-1 seaplane jet exploded in the air at a public demonstration in San Diego in 1954.

*Bob Root*

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### MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

We would like to welcome new members Jimmy Harvey, Jack Oehmke, Adam Oehmke and Charles Oehmke.

#### FLOAT FLY

Just a reminder, the Comets'/Casitas float fly is next week. Get those float planes ready!

#### NEW GATE COMBINATION

We had to change the padlock combination because a member gave the combination to some of his friends who were not Comets members. It is assumed that all members are aware that the gate combination is not to be given to non-members. Violations of this rule will result in the loss of membership.

#### GUESTS

We encourage members to bring guests to the field; however, we remind you there is a limit of 3 times a year per guest. After that, we suggest that you ask your guest to become a member of the Comets.

*Mike Ambarian*

## March 2008 Minutes

The Comet meeting was called to order by Mike Ambarian on March 20, at 7:30 pm, at the Oak View Community Center.

The February minutes were approved. There were no guests. We obtained two new members, Jack and his son Chuck.

**Treasurer's Report:** We now have 83 members and finances are in very good shape. The report was accepted. Treasurer Emery Balasa is recuperating from a hip replacement and Mike Ambarian will be taking on the Treasurer's duties till Emery returns.

**Safety:** All good reported by Dennis Fingold.

**Field Marshall:** Bud Scolari reported that the shower gate is now open and campers and fishermen are, or will be, crossing the runway. Please be careful. We were also reminded to abide by the speed limit on all park roads.

**Park Liaison:** Ken Marsh reported that, since Lake Casitas is currently not allowing outside private boats – the following rules are in effect for the Float Fly: ● Prior to putting any plane into the water, the floats will be inspected by a Park Ranger. ● No flying on Thursday. ● Abide by the Park Ranger inspection in order to preserve the flying site. ● Inspection Form must be signed by the Park Ranger in order to put a plane into the water. A motion was made to place a sticker on every plane inspected and if no sticker is on the plane – it will not be launched. A boat will be rented from the Lake for the Float Fly.

**Old Business:** Bud Scolari reported that a helo and park flyers area is being considered in a 38 X 15' space by the barbecue area.

Mike Amberian reported that the AMA insurance policy has been received for Lake Casitas and Kunkle Hall, at the Oak View Community Center.

**New Business:** It was reported that last month, guests of a member were given the combination to the locks leading to the flying site. Members are reminded that the combination is for members only and is not for distribution to any non-members. Part of being a Club member is enforcing security of the flying site. A motion was made, and seconded, to add a rule into the by-laws of the Club to state that it is an infraction of the rules to reveal the combination to a non-member and is reason for removal from the Club. Club members are reminded they are covered with insurance for members only and the members are paying for it. The combination will be changed.

The cost of maintaining the runway is high. It was suggested that the one-time runway fee, paid by new members, be increased. A motion was made, and seconded, to increase the one-time runway fee for new members from \$25 to \$100. The motion was passed.

Mike Ambarian is selling a trainer for \$200, if interested, please contact him.

**Model of the Month:** Bob Root brought a Skybolt he rebuilt - due to low flying and high reeds. The plane has an OS .91 engine and weighs 9 pounds.



Dan Elsasser had a Twin Comanche built from the Stafford Models kit, which was electric with each engine having its own speed control, had a 6' wingspan, retracts, and weighed 13 pounds.

Joe Horswell had a Nitro T-Rex helicopter built from a kit; it is a 50 size, weighing 7.5 pounds.

Judges decided that Dan Elsasser won.

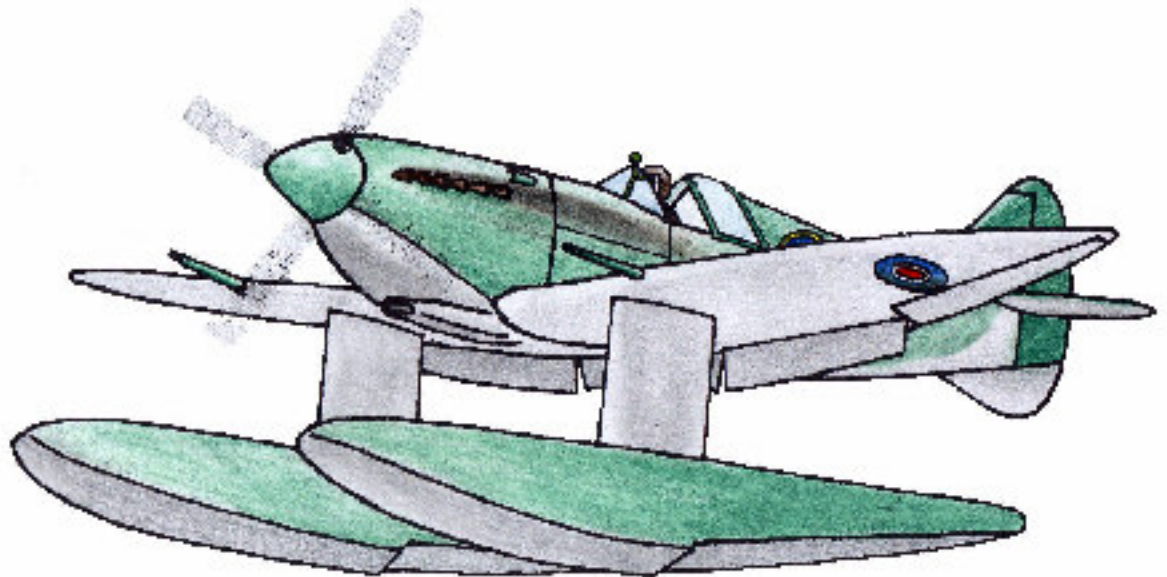
Raffle drawing was done and the meeting was adjourned at 8:40.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Sandy Brown*



NO WHEELS



# Ventura County Comets' FUN FLOAT FLY!

19 and 20 April, 2008

**Entry Fee: \$15.00 (No Pre-registration)**

*Hosted by:*

Lake Casitas Recreation Area

And

The Ventura County Comets

There Will Be A Great Raffle!

***Your Original A.M.A. MEMBERSHIP Card is REQUIRED ,  
no copies, please .***

**No helicopters, no flight training!**

- ♦ A.M.A. SANCTIONED EVENT
- ♦ RV PARKING AT THE FLYING SITE  
(NO HOOKUPS AT THE FLYING SITE)
- ♦ \*\*HOOKUPS AVAILABLE IN CAMPING  
AREAS WITH RESERVATION BY CALLING  
805-649-1122
- ♦ 10 YEARS OR OLDER IN THE PIT AREA
- ♦ PLENTY OF CLOSE IN PARKING
- ♦ GREAT SPECTATOR VIEWING AREA
- ♦ FOOD AND DRINK AVAILABLE
- ♦ ADJACENT PICNIC AREAS
- ♦ PLENTY OF FUN!

***Need More Info? Call:***

***Ken Marsh (805) 646-1962 or John Dugan (805) 646-6898***